



PATUXENT MUSIC

While the COVID-19 pandemic put an end to live in-person music performances, it did spawn some great creative work. A prime example is *Grit & Polish*, an album that veteran musicians Mark Schatz and Bryan McDowell recorded in Schatz's basement. It was created without much in the way of overdubbing and transports the listener to the feeling of a small venue show.

Schatz and McDowell spent years

## Grit & Polish

MARK SCHATZ & BRYAN MCDOWELL

in the Claire Lynch Band and are among the most versatile performers on the bluegrass scene—that's clearly showcased on this album. While there are many influences at play, it's hard not to conjure John Hartford or Tim O'Brien at times.

Schatz wrote four of the songs on the album and contributes bass, banjo, ham bone, jaw harp, feet and guitar. McDowell plays fiddle, guitar, mandolin and banjo and wrote one of the songs.

The opening track of Schatz's "Kensington Station" sets the tone that this will be a fun listen and the duo shines particularly bright on the foot-stomping instrumentals. There's also a great take on Doc Watson's fun "Muskrat" and the Flatt & Scruggs classic "The Girl I

Love Don't Pay Me No Mind." "Cruso Flood" channels Hartford and there's a nice take on Bob Dylan's "One Too Many Mornings." Lynch offers vocal support on Schatz's "My East Tennessee Home."

A listener gets a sense quickly after a dose of *Grit & Polish* that this would be a great in-person experience, which was the original intention of the two players getting together.

Closing the CD with "First Snow of December/Fly Around My Pretty Little Miss" is such a great finish, with some hooting and calling as it winds its way through to the jam standard finish, leaving the listening reaching for the Repeat button.

Needless to say, *Grit & Polish* is a treat to be savored.

REVIEWED BY  
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